

# THE BOSTON INFORMER

No. 51

The newsletter for people who care about Boston

June 2001



Source: MBTA and URS Consultants, Inc.

The Silver Line, the MBTA's first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project, is under construction on Washington Street. Although the Silver Line looks like a bus project, it is actually a demonstration project of the Federal Transit Administration's "Think Rail, Use Buses" BRT initiative. The first part of the Silver Line features a reconstructed Washington Street from Dudley Square to downtown with dedicated bus lanes along two-thirds of the alignment. The service will eventually connect with the South Boston Piers Transitway at South Station.

The BRT concept emphasizes the use of buses to achieve characteristics of rail transit with added flexibility and fewer cost and right-of-way constraints. On Washington Street, the Silver Line's state-of-the-art low-floor, articulated, compressed natural gas buses will feature Intelligent Transportation System gizmos to track the location of buses, critical for schedule adherence since buses will battle traffic north of Herald Street and in Dudley Square where there will be no bus lanes.

Bus stops will have minimalist shelters with benches and bike racks; some will have kiosks with neighborhood information. Every stop will have "up-to-the minute" information on when the next bus is coming. The Dudley Square to downtown portion of the Silver Line will open in May 2002.

**Central Artery Surface Corridor** (aka by those on the inside of the 1996 Transportation Bond Bill as "The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway")—The 1991 certificate approving the CA/T project Environmental Impact Report mandated an arbitrary 75 percent open space for the 30-acre corridor, based on the Boston Redevelopment Authority 1990 "Boston 2000 Plan" (everyone thought the artery would be finished before 2000). The Plan did not define open space, and the Massachusetts Horticultural Society parcels (19, 21 and 22) were counted in the 75 percent open space even though they will be enclosed and will charge an entry fee. In the last 12 years many groups and innumerable meetings have been devoted to planning the surface corridor.

In May 2000, MassPike initiated a master planning effort for the open space and hired SMWM of San Francisco, assisted by The Cecil Group and Halvorson Co., both of Boston. The consultants' draft final report was issued in April 2001 with a 10-day comment period. The final report was issued in May 2001; the report was still being printed at The Boston Informer press time.

The SMWM planning exercise was overseen by a five-person Corridor Master Plan Steering Committee, meetings of which were held in private. With some overlapping members, Mayor Menino's Central Artery Completion Task Force also met privately.

A 12-member legislative commission—three members each appointed by the Governor, Senate President, Speaker and Mayor of Boston—was formed to develop recommendations for future corridor ownership, governance, funding, maintenance, etc. by December 31, 2000. Despite the deadline, the commission has produced no recommendations to date except a surprising statement by one of the co-chairs, Rep. Joseph Sullivan (D-Braintree) that, "We've never been on a course to create a public funding source for this." Estimates for the restoration of the open space are about \$60 million and for maintenance, \$6 million per year.

The SMWM plan is intended to provide a basis for final design, but it is long on rhetoric—

"...a city that knows how to lead and inspire..." and "Design for today and tomorrow using contemporary, timeless materials by designers with a passion for the power, the intricacies and the delights of this place"

—but short on new vision or ideas. Basically, the plan is not a significant advance over the 1990 Boston 2000 Plan, in spite of its \$860,000 cost. Some critics of this secret/public process are calling for a forum with no prior constraints (such as eliminating the 75 percent open space requirement) to generate new concepts for the entire corridor.



## People Movers

**David Forsberg**, former director of development for Massport and later the city of Worcester, to chairman of MassPike (now a part-time job).

**Douglas MacDonald**, from executive director of MWRA to director of the Department of Transportation for Seattle, Washington.

**Frederick Laskey**, from state commissioner of revenue to executive director of MWRA.

**The Worshipful George Danby**, Mayor of Boston, retired May 31, 2001.

**Sue Kim**, from BRA to Goody, Clancy & Associates.

**Craig Leiner**, from manager of MPO activities at CTPS to Massport.

**Cathy Buckley Lewis** is the new manager of MPO activities at CTPS.

**Terry Regan** has left CTPS for other ventures.

**Pam Wolfe**, from Sverdrup Corp. to CTPS.

**Bruce Campbell & Associates** has merged with Beta Engineering.

**Michael Gruenbaum** of Bruce Campbell & Associates has retired.

**Ned Codd**, from Boston Transportation Dept. to Rizzo Associates.

**Joe Feiner** has left MASCO for other ventures.

**Alice Gray** is pursuing other ventures after leaving Massport.

**Janeen Hansen**, from Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates to Massport.

**Joe Kopaskie**, from Vollmer Associates to Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates.

**1 Charles River Plaza** – The Davis Companies' plans to redevelop the Charles River Plaza on Cambridge Street are advancing. The proponent filed the Project Notification Form with the Boston Redevelopment Authority in May, and an Impact Advisory Group has been designated to work on mitigation.

The proposed redevelopment includes two new five- and six-story buildings on the north and south sides of the plaza adding 430,000 s.f. of office/laboratory/research and development and 10,000 s.f. of retail space on Cambridge Street. The plaza's existing 954 parking spaces will be maintained.

The project is expected to be complete in late 2003-early 2004.

**2 Hotel Commonwealth** – Great Bay Holdings, whose principals include former Dukakis administration official Frank Keefe, and limited partner Boston University are moving forward with the 149-room European-style hotel in Kenmore Square. The block of interesting and infamous buildings on the south side of Commonwealth Avenue—including the site of the former Rat bar—was razed late last year. The architect is Elkus/Manfredi Architects, Ltd.

In cooperation with the MBTA and the City of Boston, both of whom are making improvements in Kenmore Square, the developers will incorporate the Green Line entrances inside the building, freeing up space on the sidewalks. The MBTA will overhaul the Kenmore busway and make the station handicapped accessible, and the City is planning a series of pedestrian improvements, including widening sidewalks, eliminating pedestrian islands and improving signals for pedestrians.

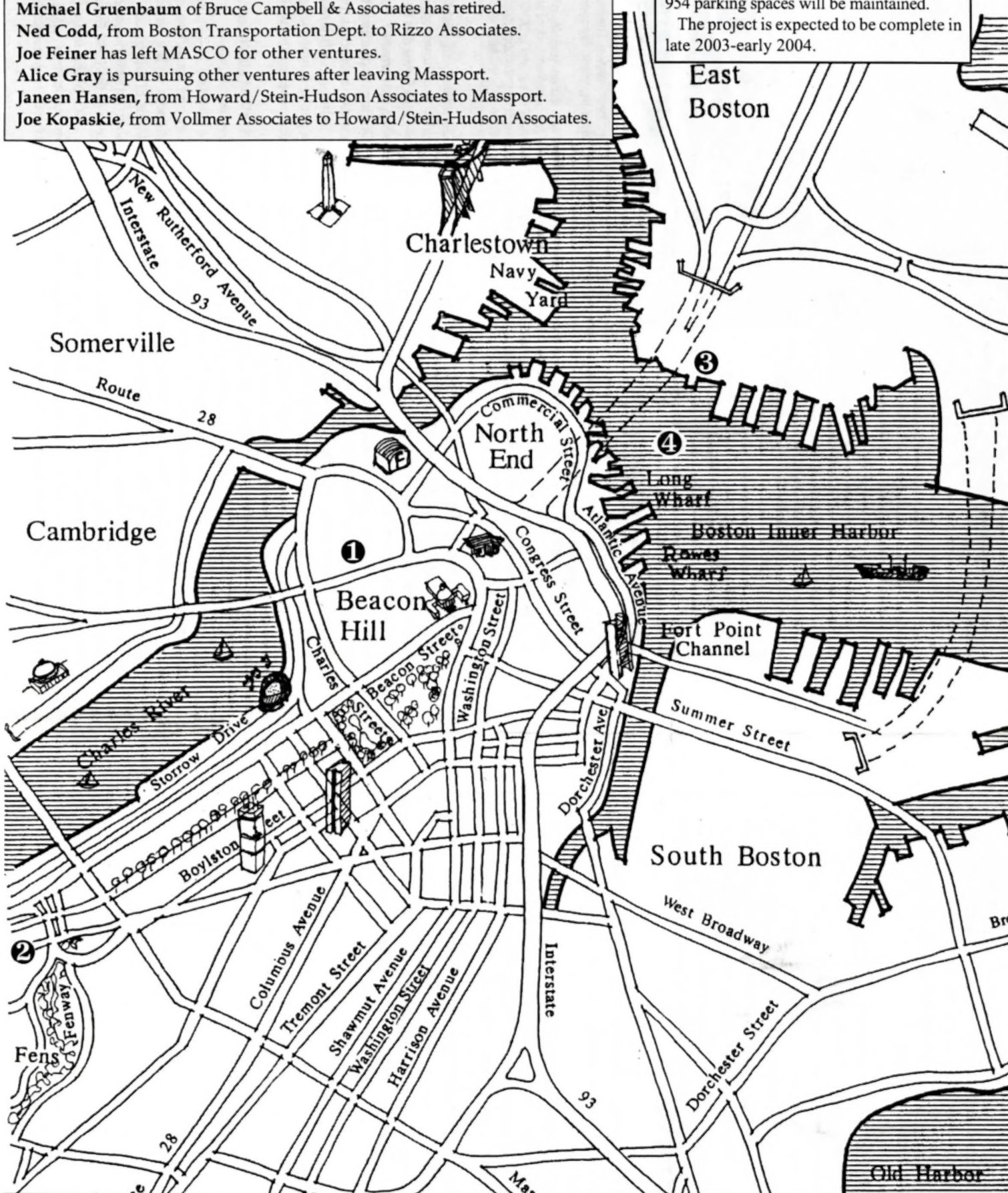
**3 Clippership Wharf** – Roger Cassin of Winn Development is proposing a major residential development for the 8 acres of land (plus 5 acres of water) in East Boston. In the 1980s Clippership Wharf was permitted for 400 condominiums, at six to seven stories. The Winn proposal is similar to what was permitted with five buildings. One of the buildings will be a parking garage plus health club, and the other four will be residential condominiums with ground floor raised 4 feet and parking at half a level below grade.

Total parking will be 0.5 space per unit, or about 200 spaces. The Maverick Blue Line MBTA station is a half-block away, and the developer may subsidize a water shuttle to downtown. Also proposed are a dock and a water taxi office with public access parkland along the water's edge. Concern has been expressed that the burden of maintaining the public parks would fall on the condominium residents and could lead to privatization of the area.

**4 Water Transportation Services** – Water shuttles run by the MBTA and private carriers ply the waters of the Boston Inner Harbor:

- Long Wharf–Charlestown Navy Yard
- North Station/Lovejoy Wharf–Charlestown Navy Yard
- North Station/Lovejoy Wharf–Federal Courthouse and World Trade Center
- Rows Wharf–Airport (met by bus shuttle to terminals)
- Rows Wharf–World Trade Center–Airport
- Long Wharf–Georges Island (and then to other Harbor Islands)
- Water Taxi Service to anywhere in the Inner Harbor, on demand (617-422-0392)

Services from North Station/Lovejoy Wharf and Charlestown Navy Yard–Russia Wharf may be instituted by the MBTA in 2002-3, depending on the MBTA Transitway/Silver Line construction schedule.



## Nine Zero Tremont Street



After three tries, a hotel is rising from the former Dini's Seafood restaurant site on Tremont Street opposite the Granary Burial Ground. A \$25 million, 204-suite hotel called **Nine Zero Hotel** is under construction by developer Intercontinental Cos. The 135,000-s.f., 19-story building is expected to be complete in January 2003. Architect Tsoi/Kobus & Associates also designed the Suffolk University Law School on Tremont Street one block from the hotel site.

Construction of the **Colonnade Residences** at Huntington Avenue and Garrison Street in the Back Bay is well underway. A dispute with abutters was resolved last year, allowing work to begin on the 20-story, 99-unit luxury apartment building. The building will have a mix of rental housing types, from 780-s.f. studios to a 2,611-s.f. penthouse suite. Direct access to the Colonnade Hotel and its services will be provided via an enclosed pedestrian walkway on the fifth floor. Parking for 125 cars will be provided in the hotel garage. Occupancy is expected late 2002-early 2003.

## Colonnade Residences



Source: Tsoi/Kobus & Associates

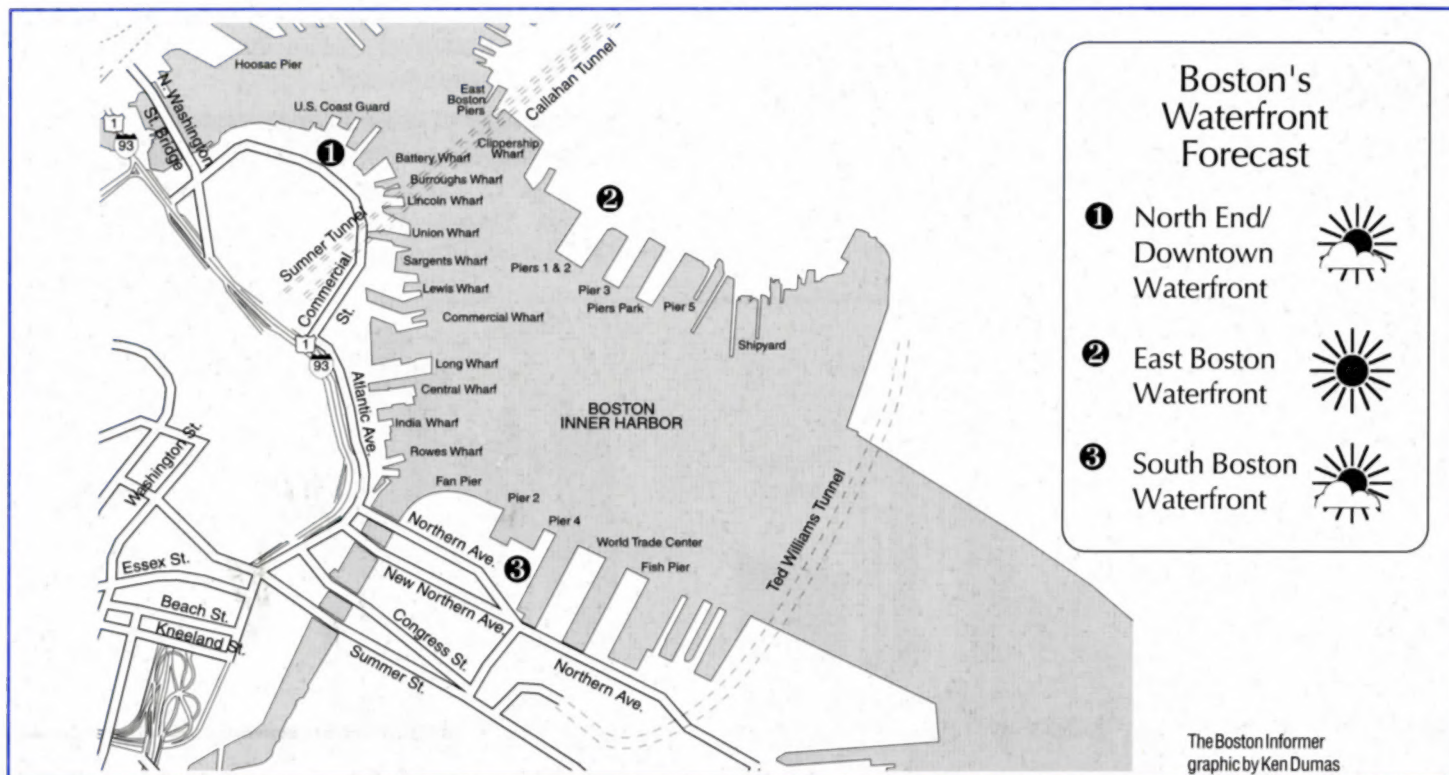
Source: Elkus/Manfredi Architects, Ltd.



# Around the Waterfront

THE BOSTON INFORMER

Spring 2001



The Boston Informer  
graphic by Ken Dumas

## Half-Speed Ahead

### North End/Downtown Waterfront

**Battery Wharf** – With demolition completed, construction is scheduled to start soon on the 185-room hotel, 99 condominiums, 38,000 s.f. of retail space and 375 below-grade parking spaces. The developer of the \$170 million project is Harold Theran of Development Management Ventures (Boston); the hotel operator is Regent International Hotels (Minneapolis). Architects: The Architectural Team (Boston). Completion expected spring 2003.

**Christopher Columbus Park** – After a false start when the community consensus redesign plan costed out at over \$15 million, a scaled-back redesign by The Halvorson Company in the range of \$3.5 million–\$4.5 million was favorably received by the community. The plan is now in final design, with the goals of going out for bid in August 2001, starting 12 months of construction in October 2001. In the meantime, a "Friends of Columbus Park" group is being formed by local residents and businesses. The Boston Parks Department has already received pledges of about \$100,000 per year from neighboring businesses to maintain the new park.

**Long Wharf** – Harborwalk on the north side is being rebuilt to double the width of the wood-decked section by ELV Associates (Boston-based developers) in cooperation with the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA).

**Long and Central wharves** – The BRA is building a new steel pile-supported timber-decked pier parallel to Old Atlantic Avenue, between the north side of Central Wharf and the south side of Long Wharf. A new floating dock will be connected to the pier by four handicapped-accessible ramps and will be used by the MBTA water shuttles. Also, a 150-foot-long berth will be built along the north side of Central Wharf accessible from the new floating dock.

**New England Aquarium** – Construction is proceeding apace for the \$18.5 million IMAX big screen (86 ft. x 66 ft.) 400-seat theater, scheduled to open in fall 2001. Construction of the new east wing building and pier extension is scheduled to start in 2002.

**470 Atlantic Avenue** – The former Sheraton headquarters building/general office building is being renovated by Modern Continental Co., which bought the 350,000-s.f. building in 1999 for \$50 million. Modern Continental added a 14th floor and a parking garage on the second floor (contrary to state regulations), without approval by the Dept. of Environmental Protection. Small fines were levied, but work proceeds.

**500 Atlantic Avenue (Vent Building No. 3)** – The owner of land at 500 Atlantic Ave., Boston Edison, recently filed a Final Environmental Impact Report for development of the parcel, currently a huge hole in the ground. The proposal calls for a 729,000 s.f. building to surround the 14-stack, 287-foot-high Central Artery/



Tunnel ventilation tower. The massive excavation is to accommodate the ventilation equipment.

The project will include a 420-room hotel, 141 condominiums, retail, restaurants, and a 375-space below-grade parking garage in a 228-foot-high, 20-story building on Atlantic Avenue that steps back to the Fort Point Channel. A publicly accessible mini-park and Harborwalk with 40-foot-wide pedestrian accessways and view corridors from Atlantic Avenue will be on both sides of the building. Architects: Elkus/Manfredi Architects, Ltd.

## South Boston Waterfront

**Municipal Harbor Plan (MHP)** – After extensive input and review by Environmental Affairs Secretary Bob Durand, the South Boston Waterfront District Municipal Harbor Plan (MHP) submitted by the City of Boston was approved with major conditions. Required changes include reducing building heights to 240 feet-270 feet, limiting total development on Fan Pier and Pier 4 combined to 3.87 million s.f. (exclusive of civic and cultural space), enlarging park space, increasing building setbacks, mandating at least 40 percent open space (exclusive of streets), and requiring approximately 127,000 s.f. of permanently dedicated civic and cultural space along the water's edge. New permanent zoning incorporating the provisions of the MHP and its modifications is also included.

**Fan Pier Pritzker Project** – The Pritzkers, developer/owners of Fan Pier, appear to have accepted the conditions of the MHP (above), including the reduced building heights, which were insisted upon by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Massport for the safety of planes taking off on Runway 27. The Pritzkers will submit revised plans to the FAA, state and city for approval in the near future. Included in the project is a parcel for a new Institute of Contemporary Art. Four architects, Peter Zanthov of Switzerland, Diller + Scofidio of New York, Studio Granda of Iceland, and Office dA of Boston are competing for the commission.

**Pier 4** – Stephen Karp of New England Development has filed an Environmental Notification Form to develop Pier 4 as a \$400 million complex of three buildings, from 100 feet high to 250 feet high with 200 housing units; a 200–250 room hotel; 385,000 s.f. of office space and 20,000 s.f. of civic space. Total size is about 1 million s.f. There would be 1,600 below-grade parking spaces and 56 percent of the land area would be open space including a waterfront park on the site of Pier 4 Restaurant. The restaurant would be moved to a new location in the complex. The developer claims the plan meets Municipal Harbor Plan requirements.

**Midway Development** – Alan Leventhal of Beacon Capital Partners is proposing a \$300 million commercial/residential complex on a seven-acre site at Midway and A streets near Gillette and the Convention Center site. The project also includes rehabilitating 100-year-old brick warehouses. The 1.75 million-s.f. development would contain offices, shops, restaurants and 175,000 s.f. of artist live/work space. The height of the two towers has been reduced to 150 feet and 100 feet (almost half as tall) and the number of parking spaces reduced from 1,200 to 950. Construction could begin within one year of obtaining city approval.

## East Boston Waterfront

The City of Boston is encouraging housing development for the East Boston waterfront. The plan emphasizes residential development on Clippership Wharf and Pier I (about 1,000 units) and on a 4.8-acre parcel owned by the City, known as Boston East. Piers Park would be expanded and improved. Work on the East Boston Municipal Harbor Plan is underway.

**Clippership Wharf** – Roger Cassin of Winn Development is proposing a major residential development for the 8 acres of land (plus 5 acres of water) on the wharf. In the

### 500 Atlantic Avenue



Vent Building before being wrapped in development (left) and after (right).



Source: Elkus/Manfredi Architects, Ltd.

1980s Clippership Wharf was permitted for 400 units of residential condominiums, at six to seven stories, and the Winn Development proposal is similar to what was permitted, with five buildings. One of the buildings will be a parking garage plus health club, the other four to be residential condominiums with ground floor raised 4 feet, and parking at half a level below grade. Total parking will be 0.5 space per unit, or about 200 spaces. The Maverick Blue Line MBTA station is at the land side of the wharf, and the developer may subsidize a water shuttle to downtown. Also proposed are a dock and a water taxi office, with public access parkland along the water's edge. Concern has been expressed that the burden of maintaining the public parks would fall on the condominium residents and it could lead to privatization of the area.

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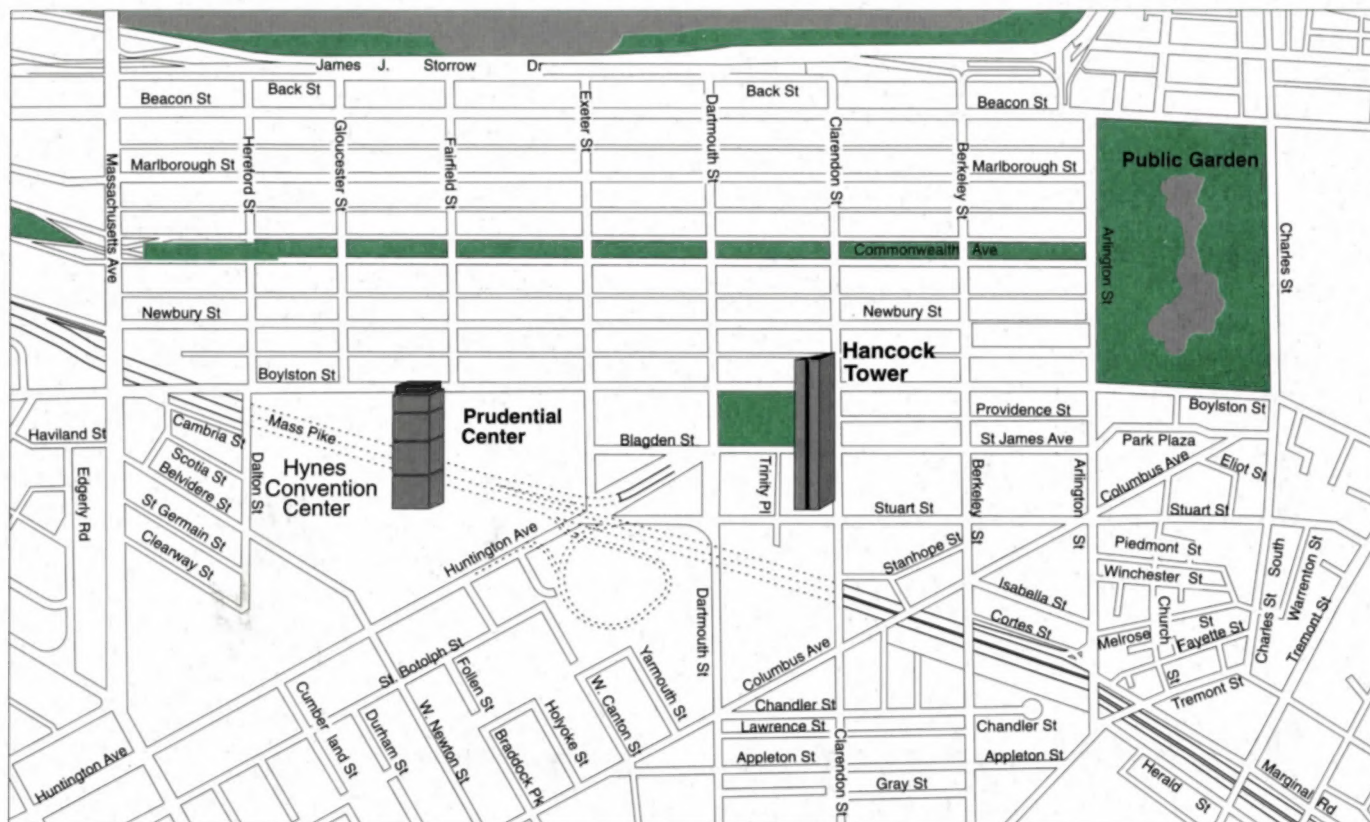
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# Back Bay Fill

THE BOSTON INFORMER

SUMMER 2001



## Back Bay Busyness

### Development

**Berkeley Street Police Headquarters** – The Saunders Hotel Group is proceeding with the design and permitting for a 200-room hotel at the former Boston Police headquarters at 154 Berkeley St. Landsmark Ltd. had been previously selected by the City of Boston to redevelop the building into a 65-room luxury hotel but could not obtain financing. The Saunders Hotel Group plan would add two floors to the existing seven floors. Architect: Jinnie Kim Design of Brookline.

**Ritz-Carlton** – The unusual blue scaffolding continues to shield the Ritz-Carlton Hotel on Newbury Street as additional destructive and instructive testing is ongoing to develop approaches to repair the existing 1920s elegant, but crumbling, facade. Reconstruction will probably take at least 12-18 months once an approach to the work is selected. The hotel and the restaurant will eventually be closed for renovation—possibly in December 2001—but no dates have been set yet. The Ritz is owned by Millennium Partners, the developer of the new Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common, at Avery and Washington streets. The new Ritz-Carlton Hotel and Towers will feature 190 hotel rooms, 63 extended-stay suites (minimum 15-day stay), and 309 luxury condominiums ranging from \$700,000 to \$7 million.

Millennium Partners recently donated \$1 million for

improvements to the Boston Common and \$50,000 per year for 20 years for maintenance. Improvements will include rebuilding historic walkways, new lighting and signage and cast-iron fence restoration along Tremont Street. The work is well underway and is timed to be complete by the end of the summer to coincide with the new Ritz opening.

**Park Plaza Development** – Construction has begun at the proposed 17-story residential and hotel development opposite the State Transportation Building. The 397,000-s.f. development includes 100-150 hotel rooms, 100-200 residences and about 270 underground garage spaces. The developers are Millennium Partners. Architect: Gary Edward Handel + Associates of New York.

**Prudential Center** – Construction continues at the Prudential Center on an 11-story residential condominium building, the Belvedere, a 65-unit condominium at the base of the 36-story office tower at 111 Huntington Avenue, scheduled to open in fall 2001. The developer, Boston Properties, at this point has not committed to repairing or replacing the Huntington Avenue access escalator which has been out of service for more than a year as they proceed with other development. The new Belvedere, retail shops and 101 Huntington facelift are scheduled for completion in late 2001.

Shaw's Supermarket, formerly Star Market, will be relocated to



the green space in front of the Gloucester apartment building at Exeter Street/Huntington Avenue/East Ring Road. In addition, an 11-story office building is under design for the area in front of the existing Prudential Tower on Boylston Street. However, in accordance with PruPAC agreements, the office building cannot begin construction until the supermarket is relocated to the Huntington Avenue site. Supermarket construction will probably begin in fall of 2001 and be complete in fall 2002.

The on-site day care provision may now be expanded in a location off-site per discussions with the PruPAC. Additional development plans approved in 1990 call for an 11-story residential and office building along Boylston Street; this is still in the discussion stages. A possible change in use along Boylston Street may have an 11-story to 14-story luxury hotel with residential and a possible new residential tower added along Exeter Street.

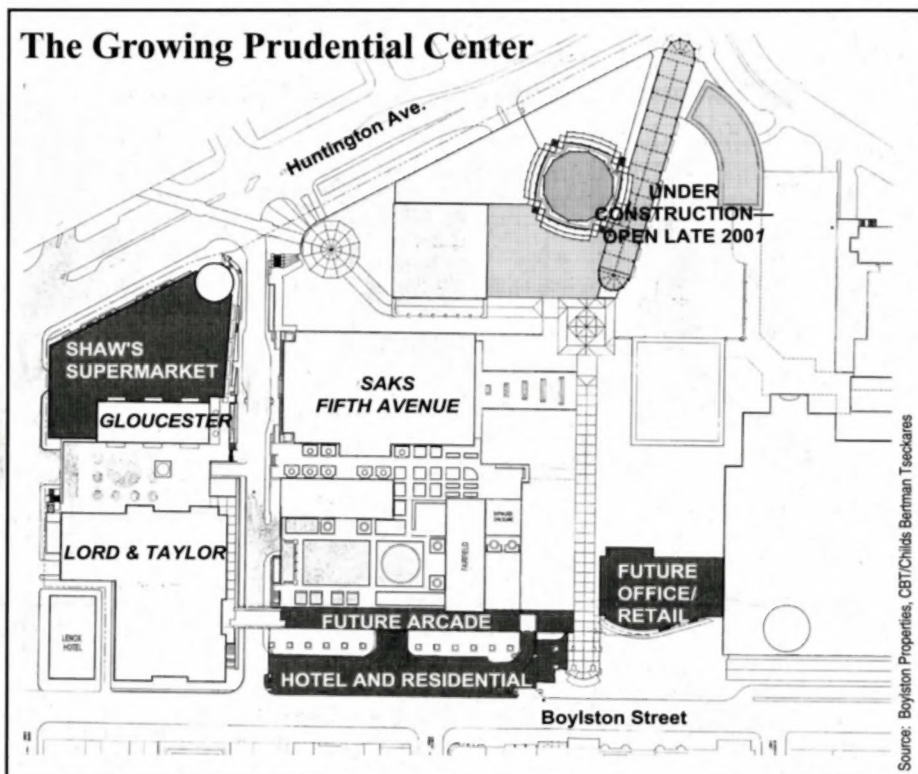
### ***Boylston Street/Dartmouth Street—***

Despite receiving high construction bids, the City of Boston is proceeding slowly with plans to reduce the pavement devoted to roadways in front of the Boston Public Library. The \$1.7-million plan will eliminate three southbound travel lanes in front to the library and create a granite-paved plaza. Boylston Street is expected to be upgraded with a "modified" Boylston Street Design Guidelines approach to that which was developed in the early 1990s.

***John Singleton Copley Statue*** – A statue honoring Copley Square's namesake, John Singleton Copley, a noted painter who lived on Beacon Hill before moving to England where he died 40 years later, ill and heavily in debt. The statue is being prepared to be

cast and will be installed in late 2002. The sculptor is Lewis Cohen, an art professor at William & Mary College.

***Parking***—Parking and loading will be given a test on Newbury and Boylston streets with the elimination of most of the metered parking spaces between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. to allow commercial vehicles to load and unload. In addition, the meters on Newbury and Boylston streets will be extended until 8:00 p.m. to allow more time for residents to return and find spaces. Boylston Street will also have loading zones increased for the morning hours. The plan will be implemented initially on a trial basis.



### ***Emerson College, Abbott Library –***

The group of buildings at Berkeley and Beacon streets, including the elegant former Fuller Mansion, was recently sold by Emerson College. The attached three-building, 25,000-s.f. complex will be redesigned into eight or nine residential units with parking inside the building at the ground/alley level.

### ***Piano Row –***

Continuing its efforts to consolidate into the "Campus on the Common," Emerson College bought its

seventh building in the theater district opposite the Boston Common on Piano Row. Emerson plans to build a 14-story dormitory and student center. Originally slated for 35–45 residential units in 1988, the development parcel was enlarged when the BRA took a contiguous parcel in 1996 to facilitate development of a 270-room hotel. After a series of delays, the project was converted to a 100-unit condominium project in 2000. Some \$2 million from the sale will be returned to the BRA as part of an "anti-speculation" clause in the prior transaction.

***Marathon Place***—Offering a view of the Boston Marathon finishers every April, two floors of luxury condominiums opposite the public library at 671 Boylston St. have been sold. Marathon Sports retail sports store has already opened on the first floor. Architect: Bergmeyer Associates.

***Charlesmark Hotel*** – A 33-room bed and breakfast inn at 655 Boylston St. is currently under construction and will be open in winter 2001. Architects: Sharkey Associates.

## **Back Bay Fill**

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## Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*!

**The Boston Informer** is published by ATC Information, Inc., six times yearly in Boston, Massachusetts. President: Anthony Casendino; vice-presidents, Anne McKinnon, Chris Fincham.

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*Boylston Street, 11:01 a.m.*



**New Back Bay Loading Regulations:  
Triple Parking Forbidden**

## You were asking...

- Q. Who won The Boston Informer competition in the Jan./Feb. issue about why anyone would want to take the risk to build on a successful parking lot?**
- A.** Of the multitude of entries ranging from thought-provoking to humorous, the entry from Peter Kuttner FAIA, president of Cambridge Seven Associates, was deemed best by The Boston Informer special panel of judges. Challenging (!) some of The Boston Informer's assumptions, Kuttner calculated a 20 percent return of \$400,000 for each \$2 million floor of an office building, compared to the \$400,000 per year profit on a single-level parking lot. Not included in his calculations, however, were the cost of borrowed money, maintenance costs and risk of vacancies for the office building.
- Q. North and South stations were linked by rail once. What happened to it?**
- A.** A freight line connecting North and South stations was built in 1872 and ran along Atlantic Avenue and Commercial Street. Congestion at South Station caused the line to be diverted across the Northern Avenue Bridge to South Boston. A passenger line, Boston Elevated, was built in 1901 and ran on elevated tracks between the two stations until 1942.
- Q. Is there anyone around who was involved in building the elevated Central Artery in the 1950s?**
- A.** Yes. Cranston Rogers (Chan), now of the Maguire Group, was a structural engineer for the Massachusetts Department of Public Works when the elevated Central Artery was built in 1951-59.

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PO Box 1473 • Boston, MA 02205-1473



Susan Lewis Library Director  
Boston Architectural Center  
320 Newbury St.  
Boston, MA

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